

On the Path of the Beloved

Episode 4 : The Divine Preparation of the Prophet (SAWS[\[1\]](#))

In The Name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet (SAWS).

As we continue with the *seerah* of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), I would like to start by rekindling our appreciation for Allah's blessings of Ramadan, forgiveness and salvation from hellfire. Furthermore, we need to appreciate the fact that He has enabled us to live to experience this Ramadan and be blessed with *Lilat Al-Qadr* (The Night of Determination) while others have passed away before it even started. These blessings should be met with the deepest gratitude and the most sincere thanks, so we might return to Allah in complete submissiveness.

Certainly, it is a great blessing for us to be able to film these episodes this year here beside the Prophet's mosque as if we were guests in his house. One more blessing, for which I thank Allah, is having such a multi-cultural audience from various Islamic countries attending in this room; we have university professors from Sudan, Egypt and Madinah, as well as youth from Syria, Palestine and Egypt. It makes me feel proud to have these grandchildren of the Prophet attending every day.

This brings me to a piece of news concerning the broadcasting schedule of this program. Many people have requested a rerun in the afternoon, as they find it difficult to follow the night episode. Thus, thanks be to Allah, in addition to the daily 6:00 p.m. rerun that is meant to serve our audience in the United States, there will be another daily rerun on the *Iqra'* TV channel, at 3:45 p.m. Saudi Arabia local time (2:45 p.m. Cairo local time).

Let us now start today's episode, which will cover the youth of the Prophet, his marriage and the final divine preparations that were essential for making the prophet eligible to receive the message of Islam. In other words, we will stop at the incident of The Cave of Mt. Hira'.

By way of introduction: here's a quick review of the main facts concerning the Prophet's background:

- Social background: He was an orphan, who had lost his mother and his father, who actually died before he was born. Furthermore, he was also an only child. This fact taught him that this worldly life is a short and temporary one.
- Residence: He was raised in the houses of five people: his mother at birth; his first nurse Halima Al-Sa'dia, in the desert, from birth up to the age of two; his mother from two until the age of six; his grandfather Abdul-Muttalib from six until the age of eight, after the death

of his mother; and finally his uncle Abu-Taleb when he was eight years of age, after the death of his grandfather. This continuous mobility taught him seriousness, responsibility, flexibility and the ability to adapt to various situations.

- **Work:** He worked as a shepherd between the ages of 8 and 15. During these seven years, he learned patience and the ability to gather people. Then, he worked in trade between the ages of 15 and 35. In these twenty years, he learned to be a good judge of people's various characters.
- **Financial Status:** Although he descended from one of the greatest Arab families, he was poor. This enabled him to mingle easily with both: the poor and the rich.
- **Activities in society:** He participated in the social and political activities of his society. From 15 until the age of 18, he took part in the war of Fajar with Quraysh, which taught him the art of war. At the age of 18, he participated in the tribal federation of Fudul, which taught him the art of peace and negotiation.
- **Educational background:** He was illiterate, which is a miracle in itself since he was still able to become the best teacher of humanity as a whole. Nevertheless, he acquired a great deal of experience from his dealings in society and his interaction with all the people around him. This teaches youth to be social and never to isolate themselves from society since this social interaction is essential in polishing one's character. The Prophet did not acquire his experience through an overnight miracle; rather it was intended that he gradually obtain these experiences over several years. Thus, I advise all youth to participate in different social and political endeavors. We need neither irresponsible youth nor youth who use religion as an excuse to keep themselves isolated from society. We need social youth who are able to build and develop our societies in order to avoid the mistake of the previous generation who did not participate in public life. Why not provide help to an orphanage or other social association? This is sort of work will produce the mature youth we need.

Let us return to the *Seerah* of our Prophet. At the age of 25, he still needed another type of experience to enable him to become a prophet for the whole world. Since he had not yet traveled, he needed to travel and have contact with other nations to learn how to deal with all types of people rather than being restricted to the Quraysh. This brings me to emphasize the importance of travel since the experience that one gains in one year of travel equals that which he might gain in 20 years if he were to live in one place.

Therefore, our Prophet started working for Khadijah Bint-Khowayled leading her caravan to Al-Sham (present day Syria, Lebanon and Jordan) and Yemen, which was necessary to introduce him to the greatest two empires at that time, the Romans and the Persians. Do you understand now how his long preparation took place?

Consequently, when his uncle Abu-Taleb approached him to suggest that he would work for Khadijah, he accepted since his view of women had always been one of respect. Hence, no feeling of embarrassment stood between him and working for a woman or dealing with her as necessity demanded. This teaches our youth not to shy from dealing with girls or women as long as there is a proper reason for it and as long as they maintain mutual respect. This is different from making up excuses as some youth do nowadays.

Notice that Khadijah was not an ordinary woman; she was a very successful businesswoman who had been widowed twice and was nearly 40 years of age at that time. Thus, when Abu-Taleb approached her to suggest that Muhammad (SAWS) would work for her, she accepted and tested him by giving him a small caravan and sending her young servant Maysara with him, whom she trusted to report to her news concerning Muhammad's (SAWS) skills and honesty. Having joined Muhammad (SAWS) on three trips to Yemen, Maysara returned to Khadijah and affirmed that he had never seen anyone as honest, trustworthy or hard working as Muhammad. This teaches our youth the value of hard work. Sometimes, I feel disappointed to see youth who would like to achieve many things in life but are not prepared to work hard. In fact, it is shameful for any young man to work two or three hours a day, then to claim that he loves Muhammad (SAWS) who used to spend long hours at work everyday.

Afterwards, Maysara informed Khadijah of how successful Muhammad (SAWS) was in making an honest profit and how he never bowed to any idols –just like herself—since he heard him telling a client that he never worshipped Al-Lat and Al-Uzza, which aroused her curiosity to learn more about him and she decided to entrust him with her caravan's major trip to Al-Sham.

Instead of taking the usual five to six weeks that most merchants took to sell their merchandise in Al-Sham, Muhammad (SAWS) managed to sell all his merchandise before he even arrived there and he returned with the profit. This teaches us that religious people who carry the responsibility of *da'wa* ([missionary activity](#)) should never confine themselves to the mosque while failing in their practical life. Our Prophet was more skillful in trade than the great merchant Abu-Sufyan, who used to spend two to three weeks selling his merchandise in Al-Sham.

This gradual success in all aspects of life was necessary to polish Muhammad's (SAWS) character and it was not miraculous. It is, in fact, very possible for youth to achieve once they commit themselves to learning and hard work. Even if we take into consideration the miracles that Allah bestowed on Muhammad (SAWS), we should keep in mind that these miracles did not interfere with the sequence of events. Instead, he gradually proved himself, first, as a successful shepherd, then, as a young merchant, who proved himself to be honest and skillful enough to pass several tests over another full year, and finally, as a very successful and well-established merchant.

The idea of acquiring success gradually over time is a main principle in Islam and in *sunnah* (the Prophet's tradition), which should teach youth to be patient as they work hard to realize their dreams.

As Muhammad (SAWS) reached this level of success in his practical life and in dealing with different people and nations, he became ready for the final step of his preparation: establishing a family. He needed to get married and lead a successful family life in order to be able to teach others how to do the same.

How did the marriage issue start? Muhammad (SAWS) had maintained a cheerful face and flexibility in all his dealings, even during times of disagreement. This cheerfulness is one major requirement for success in business, as the West later realized. Consequently, having been deeply impressed by Muhammad's (SAWS) incomparable kindness, honesty, and cheerfulness, Khadijah decided to take the first step.

Khadijah had rejected several marriage proposals by the elite of Quraysh who were attracted by either her beauty or her wealth. This continued for sometime until Khadijah opened her heart to one of her friends, Nafisah Bint Al-Munabbih, and admitted her admiration for Muhammad, and gave permission to Nafisah to talk to him concerning the marriage.

Here, we need to analyze this situation and ask whether it is appropriate for a woman to initiate a marriage proposal. According to this exemplary marriage of Khadijah and Muhammad (SAWS), yes, a woman can broach this issue. The issue is how it is done. In our present time, marriage is very difficult and our girls have to keep in mind never to follow a method that might dishonor them or render them easy in the eyes of potential husbands. Instead, let us learn from Khadijah and whom she chose to perform this task.

Being mature and eloquent, Nafisah went to Muhammad (SAWS).

Nafisah: Muhammad, are you married?

Muhammad: No

Nafisah: Why?

Muhammad: With this poverty, who would marry me?

Nafisah: Khadijah.

Muhammad: Would she accept me?

Nafisah: I will talk to her about it.

Two days later, she went back to him to inform him of Khadijah's approval and how highly she thought of him.

I appeal to our girls never to contemplate something that might render them easy or cheap in the eyes of men, who as soon as they lose their respect for a woman, would never marry her.

This is not related to religion as much as it concerns human nature, which always cherishes that which is obtained with difficulty. Thus, Islam established laws concerning dowry and considered the approval of a girl's guardian to be essential to marriage. The difficulty a man faces in obtaining his wife makes him treat her as a jewel afterwards. By contrast, the girls who accept *orfi* marriage (customary and unregistered marriage) are always abandoned in the end. See how the *seerah* touches on sensitive issues in our present life!

Back to Muhammad (SAWS) and Khadijah, whose marriage lasted 25 years against all the odds

- It is true that Khadijah was 15 years older than Muhammad. Nevertheless, the level of maturity of both characters, which is a main factor in determining whether a marriage can be successful, was extraordinary. Muhammad's exemplary maturity was quite difficult to come by. Khadijah was mature enough never to make him feel inferior to her. We need to keep in mind the actual maturity of the characters involved, especially since psychologists affirm that a woman matures faster than a man, which can create disagreements for the married couple if they are of the same age or if the woman is much older than the man. Thus, it is preferable that the man be a bit older than the woman.
- Financially, Khadijah was much wealthier than Muhammad (SAWS) but this was not a problem since their social level was close. In fact, Muhammad (SAWS) was descended from the most honorable family in Quraysh.
- Islam does not only emphasize the significance of the similarity of the couple's religious level in marriage; it also emphasizes similarity in their social status. In any case, the husband is the one who should carry financial responsibility for the family. Thus, the successful merchant Muhammad (SAWS), who had even secured a partnership with another merchant named Al-Said Ibn Abi Al-Said, was the one who covered his family's expenses. This not only refutes a claim made by some orientalist that he married Khadijah for her money, but also teaches our girls and their guardians to test their potential husbands prior to marriage to be certain of their honesty just as Khadijah herself did.

Omar Ibn Al-Khattab asked a man once whether he knew a particular person.

The man: Yes, I know him.

Omar: Have you dealt with him financially?

The man: No

Omar: Perhaps you saw him praying and nodding his head?

The man: Yes.

Omar: Then, you do not know him.

For all these reasons, Muhammad's (SAWS) marriage to Khadijah was a success. It lasted for 25 years: 15 years prior to the prophetic call and 10 years after the prophetic call. Moreover, they had six children: four girls (Zeinab, Roqayia, Om-Kulthom, Fatimah) and two boys (Al-Kasem and Abdullah). Unlike Romeo and Juliet, who never got to consummate their love and put it to the real test through marriage, Muhammad (SAWS) and Khadijah's love was tested in marriage and lasted for a long time and I have a couple of proofs:

Twenty years after Khadijah's death, during the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet was very busy handling many issues and dealing with many people. Nevertheless, as soon as he saw an elderly lady coming towards him, he made room for her and asked everyone not to disturb them for an hour. The people saw him spreading his cloak for her to sit on, then talking and laughing with her, which aroused their curiosity to the extent that, when he returned, Aisha asked him who she was.

Muhammad: Khadijah's friend.

Aisha: What were you talking about?

Muhammad: We were remembering the good old days of Khadijah.

After Khadijah's death and Muhammad's (SAWS) marriage to Aisha, every time the Prophet heard a knock at the door similar to that of Khadijah, he used to wish that the visitor be her sister Hala.

This great love and loyalty lasted 25 years but was interrupted by a very difficult event - the death of the two sons of the prophet. The Prophet learned again and again that life is not worth much. Through these events, Allah taught the Prophet that he should live for his goal, and not get distracted by life. One died at the age of three and the other at the age of four, at the age when parents are most attached to their children. In 35 years, the Prophet went through the death of people very close to him, his father, mother, grandfather and two sons. This emphasized to the Prophet the fact that life is short, and that it isn't worth sacrificing the hereafter for.

We don't have to go through all those hard events to understand this; you don't have to lose a beloved to realize how little life is worth. **"Indeed you have already had a fair example, in the Messenger of Allah, for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much." (TMQ[2], 33:21).** Live for your goals, live for Allah's cause. Don't live to raise your kids, you will die, or they will die. It's not worthy. Another lesson we learn from the death of the Prophet's children is for those who have lost a child. Sometimes, Allah takes one thing from you to give you something better. Sometimes, a child is destined to go to hell, but when they die young, their parents start doing good things for their sake, and he goes to paradise because of these deeds.

Now, the next step in preparing the Prophet for his mission was to show his humanity to all mankind, not only Muslims. This is something Muslims should learn from. They should look at how merciful the Prophet was to non-Muslims before Islam. Was the Prophet sent for Muslims alone, or for every human? Of course he was sent for everyone. Thus, the Prophet has to go through experiences to show others how to be merciful for all mankind. Some Muslims limit their mercy only to Muslims, which is not how the Prophet was. Let's look at the story of Zaid Ibn Haretha. This happened before the prophethood. There was a woman called Sa'da Bent Ta'laba, who was Zaid's mother. This woman went out with Zaid, who was eight then, to another village. The boy was kidnapped on the way and later sold in the market of Akadh as a slave. A man called Hakim Ibn Hossam Ibn Khwayled, Khadijah's nephew, bought him. Zaid was given as a gift to Khadijah, who gave him to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). The boy lived with the Prophet while his parents were looking for him. Then, one day, the father was told that his son lived in Prophet Muhammad's (SAWS) house.

He started gathering money to get his son back. The father then met with Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and asked him to accept the money in return for his son. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) told him that he had a better solution, which was to let the boy choose where he wanted to be. If the boy chose the father, then he could have him back and he wouldn't have to pay, but if he chose the Prophet, he would stay with them. Can you see how merciful he was? The Prophet was not Muslim at this time; he was just treating them in a humane way. The Prophet also did not just tell them they could have him back. He was merciful to Zaid. He wanted him to choose what he thought was best. Zaid chose to be with the Prophet. His father asked him how he could choose being a slave over being with his parents. Zaid replied saying that the Prophet had mercy he had never seen the likes of before, and he wouldn't ever leave him, no matter what was offered. See how merciful the Prophet was? They were not Muslims. Mercy is not something we only limit to Muslims. We should all learn from that.

The last step in preparing the Prophet for his mission was to test his leadership capabilities. He had to be able to solve disagreements between people and unify them. Also, it is crucial that before Islam, he would be recognized as an honored person among his people. This is essential because after the prophethood, it would be clear that those who did not follow him did it not because they didn't trust his honesty, but rather because of other interests they might have had.

The Prophet was now 35 years of age. Quraysh (the tribe of the Prophet) decided to rebuild the Ka'ba. People were scared to tear the Ka'ba down in order to rebuild it, because Abraha and his army had died trying to tear it down. So, Al-Waleed Ibn Al-Moghera, who was known for being brave, said he would do it. He said that since they were doing it for a good cause, Allah wouldn't harm them. This is an important point; Allah accepts good intentions even if you are not a Muslim. So, Al-Waleed started

tearing down the Ka'ba, and all the rest waited for the next day. When they were sure that nothing would happen, they all started work.

The Quraysh said that to rebuild the Ka'ba, they had to make sure that all the money used was coming from moral sources, not from immoral ones (i.e. stealing for example). This is another important point. Non-Muslims knew that Allah would not accept money coming from unethical sources. This is something we know through our *fitra* (the original knowledge a human is born with), so why do we Muslims sometimes ignore it? How can some Muslims feed their children with money from *haram* sources? What grows out of *haram* money is destined to hellfire. How could you do this to your kids? An important issue nowadays is the copyright issue. A lot of people do this, ruining the chances of those who make new things to gain from their work. This is very harmful to the country as a whole, and it ruins our chances of development.

Now, back to the Ka'ba. Every tribe built a portion of the Ka'ba, as it was considered an honor to do so. After the building was done, it was time to place *al-hajar al-aswad* (the stone in the holy mosque, which is a stone from paradise) back into its place. Every tribe wanted to put *al-hajar* back in its place, and they couldn't agree who would do it. The issue got so complicated that one tribe said they would start a war if they were not the ones to move *al-hajar*.

Three days passed, and no decision was made. Al-Waleed then suggested that they should allow the first person to come in through the door of the place they were sitting in to judge who would carry *al-hajar*, no matter who that person was. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) came through the door. Notice how Allah arranged for the Prophet to be the one to judge this issue. This is an important point as well. Miracles did not happen to the Prophet in a way to shift events, but Allah arranged things for him. You too, if you work and put effort into your work, Allah will arrange things to work out for you.

As soon as the Prophet came in, all of them were happy and proclaimed him as honest and agreed to take him as a judge. This announcement was made before his prophethood, which shows how people honored him. Thus, Allah says what can be translated as, **"Yet surely they do not cry lies to you, but the unjust (people) repudiate the signs of Allah."** (TMQ, 6:33). The people then asked the Prophet what they should do. The Prophet came up with an intelligent solution very quickly, as a leader should. He asked them to spread a cloak on the ground. He then picked up *al-hajar* and placed it on the cloak. Next, he asked a representative from each tribe to hold on to the cloak and they all moved with it to the

Ka'ba, where he placed it in its position. He allowed them all to join in, which made them feel they each had accomplished something.

The Prophet was merciful to the non-Muslims on this day when he carried *al-hajar* to prevent the war. He was merciful to Muslims afterwards when, during hajj, he wouldn't touch *al-hajar*, and instead he only pointed to it without touching it, so that people wouldn't fight to touch it during hajj. I really feel great love in my heart for Prophet Muhammad (SAWS).

Anas Ibn Malek said that Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) entered Madinah on a Monday and it was lighted by his presence (which indicates it became pleasant to everyone) and he died in Madinah on a Monday, when everything darkened (it became unpleasant to others). People then asked him what he wished for? He said, "I don't want anything from this world. I wish to meet him on the Day of Judgment and tell him; your servant Onayes (young Anas), and he would accompany me to paradise.

After all this, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was ready to start receiving the message from Allah. He had been fully prepared for it in all aspects and the world was waiting for him to start his mission of fixing the world. That's what the world needs now too; someone to fix what is going wrong.

[1] *Sala-llahu Alaihi Wa-Sallam* = All the Prayers and Peace of Allah be upon him.

[2] TMQ=Translation of the Meaning of the Qur'an. This translation is for the realized meaning, so far, of the stated (Surah:Ayah) of the Qur'an. Reading the translated meaning of the Qur'an can never replace reading it in Arabic, the language in which it was revealed.

Translated by:



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